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1866.





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S K E T C H

OF THE

LIFE OF DR. CROSBY,

OF

CHARLESTOWN, N.H.

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By REV. LIVINGSTON STONE,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH PARISH, CHARLESTOWN, N.H.

BOSTON:

PRESS OF JOHN WILSON AND SONS.

1866.

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S K E T C H .

ON the 30th of December, 1864, there occurred in Cambridge, Mass. the death of a man whose services deserve to be registered in some worthier testimonial than the following simple sketch.

Whatever may be its inadequacy, however, we have at least this reflection for a compensation, that the more modest and simple the memoir which records his life, the more it will accord with the wishes and unassuming character of the deceased. The person of whom we speak is the Rev. Dr. JAAZANIAH CROSBY, who was, for over fifty years, the pastor of the Unitarian Society at Charlestown, N.H., where he earned a name, which, if less widely known, is no less honored than that of many who have labored in larger spheres of usefulness.

Dr. Crosby was born in Hebron, N.H., on the 3d of April, 1780. He was the son of Jaazaniah and Elizabeth Crosby. His father was from Billerica: his mother was from Pepperell. Very few incidents can now be gathered of his early life.

But it is well known, that the humble circumstances of his parents, and the less favorable facilities of the time for obtaining knowledge, threw many difficulties

in the path which he early decided upon taking, of securing for himself a liberal education. The difficulties of his way, however, he overcame by a perseverance, which, for a boy of his age, is creditable in the extreme.

Writing and ciphering on a board with chalk and charcoal ; walking two miles to school and back ; preparing himself, with only eighteen months' schooling, for Exeter Academy ; walking, when prepared, to the academy itself, eighty miles distant, for examination, — are among the things which testify to the persevering spirit that surmounted obstacles to which a less resolute will would have succumbed. With the energy manifested in his preparation for Exeter Academy, we are not surprised to learn, that, two years after his entrance there, he passed the examination for admission into Harvard College, where he spent the usual four years of a college career, graduating in the class of 1804. His college course was characterized by the same perseverance which marked the period of his preparation.

He struggled manfully against the disadvantage of his poverty, and met his college expenses by working between recitations, and particularly by doing writing in the office of the clerk of the Court.

When he graduated from college, he was rewarded for his diligence, by receiving the appointment of teacher in the academy, to which, six years ago, he had walked the eighty miles of his journey, a poor and obscure boy. A year after, however, he turned his attention to the study of the profession which

afterward became the work of his long life ; and, in 1805, following the custom of the times, he placed himself, as a theological student, under the charge of a neighboring clergyman. The person whom he selected for his instructor was Dr. Appleton, afterward distinguished as President of Bowdoin College.

During his studies with Dr. Appleton, he passed through the stage of experience common, we believe, to most young aspirants for the ministry, if not for other professions, during which the discouraging appearance of the difficulties of their profession, disclosed by their nearer view of its actual character, begets the impression that they have mistaken their calling.

The distrust which Dr. Crosby then felt, was perhaps augmented by the divergence — which his future course shows to have become greater and greater as he grew older — between his religious views and the prevailing theology of the time ; a difference which his native honesty of mind alone, would have prevented him from setting aside by a passive ignoring of its existence. However that may be, Dr. Crosby's stage of discouragement coming at a more fortunate time than it does to some others, before the actual assumption of his profession, and therefore at a time when he was free to entertain the question of following it, — he laid his case before Dr. Buckminster, of Portsmouth, N.H., and requested his advice. The doctor kindly listened to his case, and counselled him to proceed with his profession.

In accordance with this counsel, the young man

returned to his studies ; and, having finished them, he received, on the 11th of May, 1808, from the Piscataqua Association, a license to preach, drawn up in the handwriting of his old friend in need, Dr. Buckminster. His religious differences with the Calvinistic theology of the period began to show themselves very soon after he assumed the actual duties of his profession. Indeed, there were some dissenting votes in the association which gave him his license to preach, on account of the heterodoxy of the views which his examination disclosed.

A year or two afterward, having received a call from the society at Lyndeborough, the council which assembled to ordain him voted it inexpedient to proceed with his ordination, on the ground that his religious opinions were not sufficiently orthodox.

Not long after, having received a call from the society at Freeport, Me., he declined it, because of a considerable opposition in the parish, for the same reasons which influenced the Lyndeborough council. Finding, however, a year later at Charlestown, N.H., a society whose theological views were more congenial with his own, he received and accepted a call there, and was ordained over the parish on the 17th of October, 1810. From that time until the day of his death, he remained the pastor of the parish over which he was first ordained ; furnishing an instance, which has few parallels, of a life-settlement of over fifty years. The society at Charlestown, when he came to it, was Orthodox Congregationalist, though it is to be presumed, from subsequent events, that it

was somewhat tinged with the more liberal views of the Unitarians, who were just then coming into notice.

After his ordination, Dr. Crosby gave free rein to the liberal opinions he had always to some extent entertained; and, before a long time had elapsed, he came out publicly as a Unitarian. His people, quietly following in the same path, endorsed the change without dissension; and both minister and society remained Unitarian from that time.

Dr. Crosby continued sole pastor of this people till his whitening hair, which had grown gray in their service, gave warning, that, though the inward man was renewed day by day, the outward man must soon succumb to the infirmities of age.

During this long period, he preached regularly to a people who clung around him with the warmest affection and reverence; and who, under the happy influence of his teaching and example, held the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, and maintained a prosperous and vigorous society during his whole administration.* The burden of his preaching, which had so excellent an influence upon his parish, might be said to be the song of the angels at Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest; and, on earth, peace, good will toward men," so thoroughly were his ser-

* In order to avoid giving a false impression, it is proper to note here, that fragments of the society have, at various times, broken away from the original stock, on account of theological difference, and have established successively a Methodist, Orthodox, and Episcopal Society, of which the first mentioned has now become extinct.

mons imbued with the spirit of this first Christmas anthem.

His youthful and buoyant heart, which age could not reach, and which was always kept warm with the love of his fellow-men, did much to arrest the advance of the ravages of time upon his physical frame ; and it was not till the forty-sixth year of his pastorate, and the seventy-sixth of his life, that the strength so long devoted to his people declined to such an extent, as to cause him to require the aid of a colleague to share his labors.

Even after that time he preached at intervals until the Thanksgiving day of 1862, on which occasion he read the last sermon which was heard from his lips. He had two colleagues before his death.

The first was Rev. Adams Ayer, who was installed at Charlestown, in June, 1855. The second was Rev. Livingston Stone, who succeeded Mr. Ayer, in June, 1864. In the winter of 1864-5, Dr. Crosby, now eighty-four years old and very infirm, met with a calamity which was of a most serious character to an old man like himself, and which without doubt very much hastened his departure.

At five o'clock, on the morning of the 15th of December, he discovered his residence to be on fire, and immediately found that the fire had progressed so far as to render it dangerous to stay in the house a moment.

Although it was still dark out of doors, and the thermometer at zero, and the snow a foot deep, there was no alternative left for this infirm man of over

eighty years, but to leave the burning building at once, without waiting for time to dress. So, throwing a shawl about his shoulders, barefooted and thinly clad as he was, he hurried out into the snow and wintry night-air, with his wife and servant, to escape the flames.

It was some time before any one could be roused ; and during the space which intervened between the discovery of the fire and his safe reception in a neighbor's house, an interval of many minutes, he was exposed to all the severities of an unusually inclement December night.

In two hours his house was entirely destroyed ; and his books, papers, clothes, even the church records covering a period of almost a century, every thing in fact which he possessed, except a few articles which were hastily taken during the fire from the front part of the house, were consumed by the flames. It was a sad misfortune for the old man's waning strength to bear ; and, though he sustained his losses with a wonderful serenity and composure, the event was undoubtedly the immediate occasion of his death, which took place two weeks after.

The circumstances in which the burning of his house had left him were no sooner known than petitions came to him from friends in every quarter, to make his home with them.

He had a strong inclination to stay with his friends in Charlestown, but finally yielded to the urgent wishes of his sons, to visit one of them at Cambridgeport, Mass.

While here, although he never lost the serenity of mind which he maintained through the recent trying events, and though he received every attention which filial affection could bestow, the effects of his exposure and subsequent exertions, nevertheless, proved to be more than his aged frame could endure; and, falling sick a few days after, with an attack of erysipelas, he died on the 30th of December, 1864. Dr. Crosby was first married on the 30th of April, 1811. His wife, Anne R. Parker, of Wolfboro, N.H., lived but a year and a half after their marriage, giving birth to a child just before her death.

On the 30th of November, 1814, Dr. Crosby married again. His second wife was Huldah R. Sage, daughter of the clergyman at Westminster, Vt. With her he lived until April, 1835, when she was also removed by death, after having become the mother of ten children.

In November, 1838, he married again. His third wife, Elizabeth Allen, of Braintree, has survived him; but, owing to the unfortunate circumstance of the burning of their house, is not now residing in Charlestown.* Besides some articles in the periodicals of the time, Dr. Crosby's published productions were — a Sermon, which he was invited to deliver before the Legislature of New Hampshire; a Sermon

* It is a singular fact, that, although Dr. Crosby lived so long, and brought up so many children, in Charlestown, there is now, since the destruction of his house and the removal of his wife to another State, no one of his family or descendants, nor any visible trace of his residence, left there; and only the good he has done, and his memory in the hearts of his people, bear witness to the life he spent among them.

preached at the Dedication of his newly-built Church, in 1843; a Sermon delivered in 1860 at the Semi-centennial Anniversary of his Ordination, a well-remembered occasion in Charlestown; and a History of Charlestown, N.H., now preserved among the collections of the New-Hampshire Historical Society.

In 1853, Harvard College paid Dr. Crosby a well-deserved tribute to his long and faithful services, by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Dr. Crosby, though not widely known, was much loved and esteemed by all within the circle of his acquaintance. In fact, he had the universal affection and respect of all who knew him, from the little children he had only patted on the cheek, to the old men who had known him for a lifetime.

This is not difficult to account for; for being himself, at heart, a friend to all, and having in his large soul a place for the kindly remembrance of all whom he had met, the friendly feeling that came back to him was but the natural response to the kindness of his own heart. In no man, more than in him, was fulfilled, in respect to friendliness of feeling, the Scripture saying, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."

This sentiment of attachment and regard, which was inspired by Dr. Crosby in those whom he had met, has not by any means terminated with his life; but his memory is still held in universal affection and

reverence in the community where he lived, and especially in the hearts of those who have known him longest. The perfect correctness of Dr. Crosby's life, and the willing and unanimous endorsement which it received, from those who had seen him day by day for over fifty years, are circumstances which we cannot omit to mention.

The remark, "No man can say aught against Parson Crosby," which was often made by one neighbor of his parish to another or to strangers, when the doctor's name was mentioned, shows how well the correctness of his life was known and appreciated in his own parish, where the people knew him best. So far indeed was he from having any scandal attached to his name, that he seems never to have been charged with those common and lesser faults which are merely the result of thoughtlessness, imprudence, or forgetfulness.

Always faithful in all his relations to his flock, careful to visit all, especially thoughtful to visit the sick, prepared for all his public duties, seeming to hold all his people in his mind always, and wedding himself to them for life, he presented an example of the ancient race of *faithful* pastors, of which so few instances are left in these strangely altered times.

The fact that his outward life was so far above reproach, refers us back to an uncommon purity of mind and fidelity of purpose as its source; for such fruits could only come from such a tree. Dr. Crosby was a remarkably genial man; and all who came in contact with him felt at once a genial chord in their

own nature, responding to the cheering influence of his presence.

Always seeing the cheerful, sunny side of life himself, he had the faculty, which genial persons have, of bringing it out to the sight of others ; which had the effect of leaving a singularly cheering and happy impression, even on any one who had merely a chat or chance meeting with him, however short.

There are few who, by their power of striking a happy chord of sympathy in those they meet, can win the hearts of all around them as he was able to do.

And to a soul, full of genial and happy feeling, were not wanting the words to give it ready and graceful expression. A cheering salutation, a happy remark, or a playful jest, was always ready on his lips to carry the sunshine of his own heart into the hearts of those about him ; and, besides being always ready with the impromptu repartee, he had, stored away in his memory, a rich hoard of anecdotes, from which he seemed to be able to draw indefinitely, to enliven as well as to illustrate his conversation. With his genial temperament was not joined the unstable habit so often accompanying that temperament, and converting it into a snare. But, on the contrary, stability of character was his forte.

His conduct was governed by well-pondered principles ; and these controlling elements of his life were firmly anchored in his soul, and were subject to none of the fickle vacillations which often make sport of less stable characters.

They were formed in righteousness, and, knowing their strength, he stood upon them as upon a rock; and the righteousness on which he rested, and in which he trusted, seemed to impart a degree of its enduring stability to his character.

In every event of life, he was the same steadfast, serene, cheerful man. In times of excitement and alarm, his composure and self-possession never forsook him.

In the day of good fortune, he was not over-elated with his prosperity. In the day of ill fortune, he was not unduly depressed with his adversity; but, through all, he maintained the even tenor of mind which characterized his whole career.

Of the stability of character which he possessed, and which seemed to be the foundation on which his composure and serenity rested, there is a striking exemplification in his long pastorate at Charlestown, where, without changing or wishing to change his lot, he remained from the time of his settlement to the end of his unusually long life. Dr. Crosby's fellow-townsmen, will long miss his venerable form in their streets, his kindly smile and friendly salutation, which always carried a benediction with them.

His former parishioners will long miss his well-known voice in the pulpit, where, though he had not preached for two years, he had taken part in the services up to the last days of his life; and all who knew him, whether high or low, rich or poor, old or young, will feel that they have lost a friend.

But there is consolation in the reflection that his

death was not an untimely one. He had fulfilled the measure of mortal years. He had even passed that exterior boundary, beyond which we are told that our strength is but labor and sorrow. Like the full corn in the ear, his spirit had ripened for the harvest, and was ready to be gathered into the heavenly garner.

We are thankful that he lived so long, thankful that so faithful a "life-record was closed without a sad appendix of dotage and decay;" and we can all now rejoice with him that his earthly labors are finished, the burdens of age resigned, and his cross exchanged for his crown.

He was faithful over the few things entrusted to him here: he has gone to be made ruler over many things.

APPENDIX.

REV. JAAZANIAH CROSBY, D.D.

The following sketch of Dr. Crosby, as will be seen by the initials, is from the graceful pen of Dr. Sprague, of Albany. It was first published in the "Christian Register" of Oct. 4, 1865.

JAAZANIAH Crosby, a son of Jaazaniah and Elizabeth (Gilson) Crosby, was born in Hebron, N.H., April 3, 1780. His father was originally from Billerica; his mother, from Pepperell. His father was not a professor of religion; but his mother was a communicant in a Congregational Church under the care of the Rev. Thomas Page, an uneducated, but worthy and sensible man. The family were in humble circumstances; and he himself worked on a farm until he was eighteen years old, during which period he attended school not more than a year and a half, and then the school was distant from his father's house two miles. But he had a decided passion for acquiring knowledge; and he *would* indulge it, though, in doing so, he had to battle with the ills of poverty. He used to indulge his *intellectual* tastes by writing with chalk and coal on a board, and *ciphering* in the same way. At the age of eighteen, he went to Exeter Academy, walking the whole distance (eighty miles); and, either then or at a subsequent time, he paid all the expenses of his journey with three and ninepence! After studying at Exeter two years on a charity foundation, he entered the Freshman Class at Harvard College in 1800, and, during the whole four years, lived in the family of a lady who gave him his board; and his other expenses he was able to meet, partly by means of some appropriation from a college fund for indigent students, and partly by writing in the office of the clerk of the court.

Immediately after his graduation, in 1804, he returned to Exeter Academy as an assistant teacher, and remained there for

one year, at the close of which he went to the neighboring town of Hampton, and placed himself under the care of Dr. Appleton (afterwards President of Bowdoin College) as a theological student; meanwhile availing himself of a fund at Exeter for the support of indigent young men in their immediate preparation for the ministry. During the time that he was prosecuting his theological studies, he became quite discouraged, and thought he had mistaken his vocation: whereupon he consulted Dr. Buckminster, of Portsmouth; and the doctor, though fully aware of his anti-Calvinistic tendencies, advised him to proceed. He was licensed to preach by the Piscataqua Association, on the 11th of May, 1808; Dr. Buckminster acting as scribe, and writing the certificate of his licensure. Two or three of the ministers voted against him, from being dissatisfied with his religious views; among whom was a Mr. Thurston, who afterwards became a Unitarian. He preached his first sermon at Greenland, and afterwards preached for a short time at Lyndeborough; and the next year (1809) preached there as a candidate for three or four months, and received a call to settle, though it was very far from being unanimous. He, however, accepted the call, and the council called to ordain him assembled, and examined him for three hours; and though there was a majority in favor of sustaining his examination, yet, in view of the divided state of the parish, it was thought inexpedient to proceed to his ordination. He said the minister of Temple asked him, if an unregenerate man was not as bad as the devil; and, when he replied in the negative, his answer seemed to occasion surprise. In 1809 he preached as a candidate at Freeport, Me., for three or four months, and received a call to settle there; but declined it on account of a strong opposition. On the last Sabbath in March, 1810, he preached first at Charlestown, N.H., as a candidate, though he had previously supplied the pulpit there a few Sabbaths about the close of 1808. In due time, the church and congregation gave him a call to become their pastor, and he accepted it; and was ordained on the 17th of October, 1810,—the Rev. Jacob Abbot, of Hampton Falls, preaching the ordination sermon.

In 1853 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard College. He continued sole pastor until June, 1855, when he was relieved by the accession of Rev. Adams Ayer (a graduate of Harvard in 1848) as his colleague. He (Mr.

Ayer) resigned his charge after a little more than four years. Their next settled minister was Mr. Livingston Stone (a graduate of Harvard in 1857), who still continues with them. Though Dr. Crosby resigned the main charge of his parish in 1855, he continued to preach occasionally till 1863; but, from that time, was prevented from attempting any public service by his liability to vertigo, which he considered as foreshadowing apoplexy. His general health, however, continued good; and his spirits seemed at my last meeting with him, a few months ago, just as buoyant as ever.

He was married on the 30th of April, 1811, to Anne Rust Parker, of Wolfboro', N.H. (by whom he had one child, now Mrs. Dr. Cazneau Palfrey), who died immediately after the child's birth, and about a year and a half after their marriage. On the 13th of November, 1814, he was married, a second time, to Huldah Robinson, daughter of the Rev. Sylvester Sage, of Westminster, Vt.; who died April, 1835, the mother of ten children, seven of whom still survive. On the 30th of November, 1838, he was married, a third time, to Elizabeth Allen, of Braintree, Mass., who survives to mourn her husband's death. Each of his marriages has been to him a source of great comfort and blessing.

Dr. Crosby published a Sermon delivered before the Legislature of New Hampshire, 1830; a Sermon at the Dedication of his Church, 1843; a Sermon at the Semi-centennial of his Ordination, 1860; and a History of Charlestown, N.H., among the Collections of the New-Hampshire Historical Society; besides some anonymous articles in periodicals.

Dr. Crosby was living in the midst of a community to whom he was greatly endeared, and by whom he was greatly honored, when the terrible disaster took place which deprived him of his home, and proved the immediate harbinger of his death. On the 22d of December, he wrote me the following brief letter, giving an account of the calamity which had befallen him.

CAMBRIDGEPORT, Dec. 22, 1864.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — You have doubtless, ere this time, heard the sad calamity which has befallen us in the destruction by fire of our house, our clothing, our books: yea, almost all our pleasant things are laid waste. We escaped in our night-clothes, with merely the addition of stockings, and a cloak over our shoulders, through snow, the thermometer at zero. Only one

besides ourselves, who went forth barefooted, escaped merely with her life. At five o'clock in the morning, we were aroused by the cry that the house was in flames. A considerable number of articles were taken from the lower part of the house; but that study, the pleasant retreat of many years, will be seen no more. Of my whole library, about twenty volumes were saved. When enumerating our losses, we end by saying, "No life was lost."

Mrs. Crosby adds kindly greetings to those of your affectionate friend,

J. CROSBY.

P.S. We are now staying here at Cambridgeport with our eldest son and family, whither, as I hope, you will soon direct a letter. Unbounded kindness has been shown by all around us, and by some whom we have never seen.

Within less than a week from the time this letter was written, Dr. Crosby suffered an attack of erysipelas, consequent upon a cold, which, within three or four days, terminated his life. His remains were removed for burial to Charlestown, where for fifty years he had had his home, and had been identified with all the interests of the place, more, probably, than any individual who survives him.

My acquaintance with Dr. Crosby commenced in the summer of 1818, just after I was licensed to preach. As I was travelling up Connecticut River, for the benefit of my health, I called at his home, with an introductory note from one of his friends, which secured me a very cordial welcome. I thought then, and have never changed my opinion since, that he was one of the most genial and good-humored and kind-hearted of men. I preached for him twice on the Sabbath (though I believe this was on my return, two or three weeks after); and, though I knew that his standard of orthodoxy even then was much lower than mine, he found no fault with either of my discourses, but said much that was designed to encourage me. In after-years, in all his intercourse with me, he distinctly recognized the fact of his being a Unitarian; but he never manifested in the least degree a controversial spirit, and I never heard him speak otherwise than kindly of his "Orthodox brethren." He was constitutionally cheerful, and a great lover of fun; and I cannot think of a person, whom I have ever known, who had a richer fund of all sorts of humorous and pithy anecdotes, or who knew better how to apply them, than he. My last visit to him was in July, 1864. Instead of finding him with his children around him, as I had been accustomed to

in former years, I found him and his wife the only representatives of the family, but living in the same venerable old mansion which my visits, thirty and forty years ago, had made familiar to me. I passed a delightful day with them, and could not but notice how intent he was upon doing every thing in his power to render me happy. His recollection of the events of his early years, and of many distinguished men long since passed away, seemed perfect. He gave me one or two of his manuscript sermons, written during the latter part of his ministry, which, like every thing that came from his pen, are characterized by the very best taste. I never had so deep an impression of his generosity as this visit gave me. The portion of Scripture that was read in the morning, in connection with the family prayer, was the 103d Psalm; and, after the prayer was over, he remarked to me, that I had hit upon his favorite psalm,—that there was no portion of Scripture which he read more frequently or with stronger relish. He and I differed widely in our religious opinions; but we were cordial and affectionate friends, and I account it a privilege to render this tribute to his memory.

W. B. S.

REV. JAAZANIAH CROSBY, D.D.

Contributed, by Rev. A. A. Livermore, to the "Christian Inquirer" of April 8, 1865.

THE recent departure of this aged and beloved clergyman of our faith should not be passed by, without a notice in the journal which he loved to read. His beautiful character and sweet Christian spirit were possessions, too, to be honored in any communion; and they have shed a lasting perfume on the lovely village where he discharged his ministry of more than fifty years. Service to the blessed gospel is not in quantity only, though in that he excelled, but also in quality; and, in quality, his was of the richest. Small alloy dimmed the fine gold, and few discords broke the long harmonious strain.

Dr. Crosby was born in Hebron, N.H., April 3, 1780; and he died in Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 30, 1864, aged eighty-four years and nine months. His parents, Jaazaniah Crosby and Elizabeth (Gilson) Crosby, were emigrants from Massachusetts; the former

from Billerica, the latter from Pepperell. His academical education was procured at Phillips Exeter Academy; and he graduated at Harvard College, in 1804, in the class of which Andrews Norton, Samuel Ripley, Samuel Sewall, Samuel Cooper Thacher, and Ashur Ware were members. Like most young men from the country who obtain a liberal education, he worked his way through difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge to a career of usefulness. He passed a year at Exeter Academy as an assistant teacher, and pursued his professional studies subsequently in Hampton, N.H., with Rev. Dr. Appleton, who was afterwards President of Bowdoin College. He was licensed as a candidate by the Piscataqua Association, May 11, 1808. After receiving calls to settle in Lyndeborough, N.H., and Freeport, Me., he finally accepted an invitation to the Congregational Church and Society in Charlestown, N.H.; and was ordained Oct. 17, 1810, his ordination sermon being preached by Rev. Jacob Abbott, of Hampton Falls. He continued sole pastor of this church until June, 1855, a period of forty-five years; and he continued to preach occasionally after the settlement of his successive colleagues, Rev. Adams Ayer and Rev. Livingston Stone, till 1863, or a period of fifty-three years. On the occasion of the half-century anniversary, a festival was held, and the long and faithful services of their aged pastor were feelingly and beautifully commemorated by his parishioners, townsmen, and friends from places near and remote. In 1853 he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard College.

Dr. Crosby was married three times; and an intimate friend, Rev. Dr. Sprague of Albany, testifies that "each of his marriages has been to him a source of great comfort and blessing." His last wife survives him. Eleven children have blessed his home, of whom eight survive; and all do honor to their parents and the lovely home of their childhood. Two of the daughters married Unitarian clergymen,—one, Rev. Cazneau Palfrey, D.D., of Belfast, Me.; and the other, Rev. William F. Bridge, of Dublin, N.H. Others of the family are widely known and esteemed in the circles of society and business.

Dr. Crosby contributed some articles to the periodicals, and published a few occasional sermons; one delivered before the Legislature of New Hampshire in 1830; one at the dedication of his new church, after the old one had been consumed by fire in

1843; one at the semi-centennial of his ordination in 1860; and a history of the town of Charlestown, in the collections of the New-Hampshire Historical Society.

Originally settled as the Congregational pastor of the South Parish of the town, and being liberal in sentiment (other societies having seceded from the old parish), Dr. Crosby was left as the minister of the Unitarian Society only. Living through a period of revolution in sentiment, he did not add to the bitterness of sectarianism, but poured upon the waters of strife the oil of charity and neighborly kindness. All loved and respected him, even if they dissented from his religious views.

Through the long, continuous years of his faithful ministry, his home and his church were the two spheres of his affections, and his labors, like Wordsworth's wise ones,

"True to the kindred points of heaven and home."

He preached Christianity through the affections; and, speaking from the heart, he reached the heart of his hearers. His discourses, if not marked by a commanding eloquence, dropped, it may be, all the more surely—not being blown about by a windy utterance—into the still, deep places of the soul, where they grew like good seed, and bore fruit. His style was pure and idiomatic English, direct and forcible, and relieved by a tone of quiet humor and gentle pathos. He was a sound scholar; and the intelligence and good taste of the society to which he ministered naturally incited him to keep his mind active, and to prepare his discourses with care.

Few parishes realized better fruits of the Spirit,—love, neighborliness, courteous and refined homes, a high tone of integrity, noble men and women, cultivated and high-toned young people; in one word, a Christian civilization. It was the gentle rain and the sweet dew of heaven that year by year ripened these harvests. No one who knew Charlestown twenty, thirty, or forty years ago, but will bear witness to the remarkably attractive and beautiful form of domestic and village society which had grown up in that Connecticut-River town, with its majestic colonnades of elms, tasteful dwellings, and charming scenery. It was the gospel dye that held those colors so fast, and the fragrance of a higher life which gave an aroma to those homes beyond that of the roses and sweet honeysuckles which were trellised over

their doors. The architect or, better, artist who had done the work was not perhaps always recognized in it, so great was his modesty and self-forgetfulness; but it was his cunning hand which had wrought at the work, and his fine genius of love and sympathetic sensibility, so ready to gush in tears at every human distress, so ready to overflow in laughter and innocent mirth at every touch of humor, which had pervaded the place.

Dr. Sprague says, in his notice of him, that "he was constitutionally cheerful, and a great lover of fun; and I cannot think of a person whom I have ever known who had a richer fund of all sorts of humorous and pithy anecdotes, or who knew better how to apply them than he." The precept of rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, never found a better subject than Dr. Crosby.

Then he preached Christianity: he had no creed but that, no fine or far-fetched theories, no philosophy or scheme of salvation. The love of God through Christ, that was all, and that was enough. This simple teaching, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation, did its steady work, and transformed the earthly into the heavenly image. He neither strove nor cried, neither broke the bruised reed nor quenched the smoking flax, but kept on, year after year, fully trusting in the sufficiency of the gospel, and finding that confidence not misplaced.

A friend has said of him, "In his pastoral relations, he was very urbane; and his love of children was a striking feature of his character. He never passed them without a friendly recognition, so that, even to the fulness of his old age, they followed —

" with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile."

It was a beautiful life and a beautiful ministry, — so gentle, so modest, so manly, so true, so sincere, so sweet, so kind. As has been truly quoted in reference to him by one of his old friends and admirers, —

" He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Some of the younger clergymen were accustomed to call him their "bishop," a pleasantry which the good man loved to reciprocate, by calling them his sons and curates, and signing himself in episcopal guise, "J. Charlestown."

But his children had grown up and entered the world, coming back often, however, to cheer the old homestead with their own loved voices, and those of *their* children. A new generation was on the stage. The old pillars had fallen: one by one "the ancient and honorable" had passed away. Society was changed; but the aged clergyman still lived on in a community which cherished him in tenderest love and respect. And we might have said, in our short-sighted wisdom, "Here will be the peaceful closing scene, still and lovely as the sunset of a long summer's day over the winding river's broad and flowery meadows." His health was good, his spirits buoyant as ever: his sensibility to the enjoyment of society was not deadened; and his was an old age, ripe, but not a touch beyond it.

Only eight days before the event soon to be related, he had written to a friend, "With the not very pleasant feeling of uselessness, I am pursuing my noiseless course without much grumbling; yea, even with a considerable degree of cheerfulness. Mrs. Crosby is constantly by my side, and does all that woman can do to 'cheat the tiresome way,' whenever it is tiresome, which is very seldom the case. *Sed linguenda tellus, domus, et placens uxor,*" — a prediction soon to be fulfilled: the earth *was* to be left behind, and home, and pleasing wife.

But we never know the mode and way, at least, of what is coming to us in this world. On Thursday, Dec. 15, 1864, at about five o'clock in the morning, the family, consisting of the doctor and his wife and a girl, were aroused by the cry that the house was in flames. The inmates escaped in their night-clothes, through the snow, with the thermometer at zero. Clothing, library, the gathered, precious heirlooms of years, "all our pleasant things," — all, except a few articles in the lower part of the house, were soon a prey to the devouring element, and the beloved old home sank in ashes, or went up in flame. Dr. Crosby wrote to a friend: "That study, the pleasant retreat of many years, will be seen no more. Of my whole library, about twenty volumes were saved. When enumerating our losses, we end by saying, 'No life was lost.'" A few weeks before, Dr. Crosby sent a copy of "Watts's Works," complete in six quarto volumes, to the library of the Meadville Theological School. That is saved.

Dr. Crosby and his wife were made happy in their great

calamity by numerous attentions from their old friends, letters of the kindest, and donations to assist in replacing their losses, so far as that might be done. They immediately repaired to Cambridge to the home of a son. For a time, Dr. Crosby seemed in his usual health and spirits, spoke cheerfully of his loss, and hoped in the coming year to occupy a new home on the old spot. But it was not to be. He was attacked by erysipelas, produced perhaps by the shock and by a cold, soon after his arrival at Cambridge. Through his illness, he was the most patient and cheerful of men; and he died as quietly and calmly as a child would fall asleep.

It seems a sad mystery, that event by which he, his home, and his family, were swept from the spot where he had spent so many happy years, and no trace left save in the memory of his people. But a view, full of beauty and consolation, is taken of it, in a letter of condolence from a neighboring Unitarian clergyman to one of Dr. Crosby's sons-in-law. He says: "In the mournful conflagration we all sympathized. What followed does not surprise me. I wondered that he could survive that night. He would have seemed *lost* in any other house. I shall think of him almost as being taken up in a chariot of fire. No stranger hands could be suffered, it now appears, in after-years, to desecrate that mansion. With all its fragrant memories it turned to flame; the incense of the prayers of nearly threescore years going up in sacrifice. Him, too, we can recollect always bright and clear. As time passes, your wife will see, that, compared with what continued years might have brought, his end was in God's good time."

The last communication of Dr. Crosby to his people was a grateful recognition of their kindness to him and his in their overwhelming catastrophe. It was read to the different societies in town, on the following Sunday.

CHARLESTOWN, Dec. 17, 1864.

DEAR FRIENDS, — In consequence of our sudden departure from the place, we could not personally express our gratitude for your ready sympathy, assistance, and attention in our time of trouble; and what we could not do verbally, we now do otherwise.

Will you now accept our warmest gratitude for your *immeasurable* kindness, and wait for your full reward in a house not made with hands, a house which no flames can devour? The Lord bless you all! Accept this as the only offering in the power of your friends, ever and sincerely,

J. CROSBY and E. A. CROSBY.

On Tuesday, Jan. 3, 1865, the funeral services were held over the remains, which had been conveyed to Charlestown, N.H., from Cambridge, where he died. The church was crowded with a new generation which had grown up under his ministry: only one person who was a member of the church at his ordination survived to attend his funeral. His successor, Rev. Livingston Stone, made an appropriate address; and Rev. William O. White, of Keene, offered the prayer. So passed away the aged and faithful minister, one of the best men whom we have ever known, beloved and respected by all who came within the circle of his influence.

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